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THE COUNTERFEITS OF THE TRADITIONAL IDEA

In our last article, we drew attention to the character of "counterfeiting" implied by the abuse that is made, in our time, of certain words such as those of "principles," "tradition," "religion," and many others besides—an abuse unconscious in the great majority of cases, assuredly, but which nonetheless corresponds quite clearly to the designs of subversion of all normal order according to which the entire present mentality is directed. One could even say that this character is found, in a much more general way and under multiple forms, in the whole ensemble of what properly constitutes modern civilization, where, whatever point of view one adopts, everything appears more and more artificial, denatured, and falsified; many of those who today criticize this civilization are moreover struck by this fact, even when they do not know how to go further and have not the least suspicion of what is really hidden behind all this. It would nevertheless suffice, it seems to us, to have a little logic in order to say to oneself that, if everything has thus become artificial, the mentality itself to which this state of things corresponds must be no less so than the rest, that it too must be "manufactured" and not spontaneous; and, as soon as one had made this simple reflection, one could no longer fail to see concordant indications in this sense multiplying on all sides and almost indefinitely; but it must be believed that it is unfortunately very difficult to escape so completely from the "suggestions" to which we have alluded, and to which, in the final analysis, the modern world as such owes its existence.

We also said that this character of "counterfeiting" constitutes, by itself, a very significant "mark" as regards the real origin of that which is affected by it, and consequently of the modern deviation as a whole,

whose truly “satanic” nature it brings clearly to light. We have already explained ourselves sufficiently, on other occasions, as to the sense that we intend to attach to this last word, so that there can be no equivocation here: it applies, in sum, to everything that is negation and reversal of order, in whatever domain this may be, and it is indeed this, without the least doubt, whose effects we can observe around us. But, at the same time, one must not forget that this spirit of negation is also, and in a way by necessity, the spirit of falsehood; it assumes all disguises, and often the most unexpected ones, in order not to be recognized for what it is, even in order to pass itself off as quite the contrary, and it is here precisely that the “counterfeit” appears; do we not in fact say that “Satan is the ape of God,” and also that “he transforms himself into an angel of light”? This amounts to saying that he imitates in his own way, by altering it and falsifying it so as always to make it serve his ends, that very thing to which he wishes to oppose himself: thus he will arrange matters so that disorder takes on the appearance of a false order, he will conceal the negation of all principle beneath the affirmation of false principles, and so on. Naturally, all this, at bottom, can never be anything but simulacrum and even caricature, but presented with sufficient skill for the immense majority of men to allow themselves to be deceived by it; and how could one be astonished at this when one sees how easily even crude impostures succeed in imposing themselves on the crowd, and how difficult, on the contrary, it is afterwards to undeceive it? “Vulgus vult decipi,” already said the ancients; and there have no doubt always been people, although never so numerous as in our day, disposed to add: “ergo decipiatur”!

Nevertheless, whoever says counterfeiting says thereby parody; these two are almost synonyms; thus there is invariably, in all things of this kind, a grotesque element that may be more or less apparent, but which, in any case, ought not to escape observers who are at all perspicacious, if indeed the “suggestions” that they unconsciously undergo did not abolish their natural perspicacity in this respect. It is by this side that falsehood, however skilful it may be, cannot help but betray itself; and, of course, this too is a “mark” of origin, inseparable from counterfeiting itself, and which should normally allow it to be recognized as such. If

one wished to cite here examples taken from the various manifestations of the modern spirit, one would assuredly have only the embarrassment of choice, from the pseudo-"civic" and "secular" rites that have taken on such extension everywhere in recent years, and which aim to provide the masses with a purely human substitute for true religious rites, to the extravagances of a so-called "naturism" which, despite its name, is no less artificial, not to say "anti-natural," than the useless complications of existence against which it claims to react by a derisory comedy whose true purpose is moreover to make people believe that the "state of nature" is identical with animality; and there is not even the simplest repose of the human being that is not now threatened with denaturation by the contradictory idea, but one conforming to democratic egalitarianism, of an "organization of leisure"! We mention here, deliberately, facts that are known to everyone, that unquestionably belong to what may be called the "public domain," and that everyone can therefore observe without difficulty; is it not incredible that those who feel in them, we do not say the danger, but simply the ridiculous, are so rare that they represent true exceptions?

"Pseudo-religion," one ought to say in this connection, "pseudo-nature," "pseudo-repose," and so on for so many other things; if one wished always to speak strictly according to the truth, one would have to place constantly this word "pseudo" before the designation of all the specific products of the modern world, in order to indicate what they really are: falsifications and nothing else, and falsifications whose purpose is only too evident for those who are still capable of reflecting.

Whatever may otherwise be the more particular idea that each person may form of what is called "Satan," according to certain theological or other views, this can change nothing in what we have just said, for it is quite clear that "personifications" do not matter here and have no place whatsoever in these considerations. What is to be envisaged is, on the one hand, this spirit of negation that we have defined and into which "Satan" is resolved metaphysically, independently of the special forms that he may assume in order to manifest himself in this or that domain; and, on the other hand, that which properly represents him and

“incarnates” him, so to speak, in the terrestrial world where we consider his action, and which is nothing other than what we have called “counter-initiation.” It must be remarked that we say “counter-initiation,” and not “pseudo-initiation”; in fact, one must not confuse the counterfeiter with the counterfeit, of which “pseudo-initiation” is in sum only one of the multiple examples, in the same way as those that we have just indicated in different orders, although it perhaps presents, as a counterfeiting of initiation, a more special importance, from the point of view in which we are placing ourselves, than the counterfeiting of anything else whatsoever. In sum, “pseudo-initiation” is really only one of the products of the state of disorder and confusion brought about, in the modern epoch, by the “satanic” action that has its conscious point of departure in the “counter-initiation”; it can also be, in an unconscious way, an instrument of the latter, but, at bottom, this is likewise true, to one degree or another, of all the other counterfeits, in the sense that they are all so many means aiding the realization of the same plan of subversion, so that each plays exactly the role assigned to it within this ensemble, which moreover constitutes yet another kind of counterfeiting of order and harmony themselves, against which the whole of this plan is directed.

The “counter-initiation,” for its part, is certainly not a counterfeit, but on the contrary something very real in its own order, as the action that it effectively exercises shows all too well, and something that claims to oppose true initiation, not to imitate it; this claim, moreover, is necessarily illusory, as we have already explained, since the spiritual domain is absolutely forbidden to it, and since it cannot in any case go beyond the “intermediate world,” that is to say the psychic domain, which is besides, in all respects, the privileged field of influence of “Satan” in the human order; but the intention nonetheless exists, together with the deliberate resolve that it implies to go properly in the opposite direction to initiation. As for “pseudo-initiation,” it is only one of those parodies of which we spoke earlier, which amounts to saying that it is nothing in itself, that it is empty of all profound reality, or, if one prefers, that its intrinsic value is neither positive like that of initiation, nor negative like that of “counter-initiation,” but simply null;

if, however, it does not reduce itself to a more or less harmless game, as one might perhaps be tempted to believe under these conditions, this is because of what we have just explained, in a completely general way, concerning the true character of counterfeits and the role for which they are destined; and one must add further, in this special case, that rites, by virtue of their nature "sacred" in the strictest sense of the word, are something that it is never possible to simulate with impunity.

We thus return to the more precise question of "pseudo-traditional" counterfeits and of what gives them their quite particular gravity, a gravity that evidently reaches its maximum when these counterfeits attack the "interior" side of tradition, that which constitutes its very spirit, that is to say the esoteric or initiatic domain. One may remark that the "counter-initiation" applies itself to introducing its agents into "pseudo-initiatic" organizations, which they thus "inspire" without the knowledge of their ordinary members, and even, most often, of their apparent leaders, who are no less unconscious than the others of what they really serve; but it must be said that, in fact, it also introduces them, in a similar way, wherever it can, for example into those political or other "movements" to which we have alluded previously, and even into authentically initiatic or religious organizations, but where the traditional spirit is too weakened for them still to be capable of resisting this insidious penetration. However, apart from this last case, which allows the exercise of a directly dissolving action, that of "pseudo-initiatic" organizations is no doubt the one that must especially hold the attention of the "counter-initiation" and be the object of more particular efforts on its part, precisely because the work it sets itself is above all anti-traditional, and because indeed it is to this alone that it ultimately reduces itself entirely. It is moreover very probably for this reason that there exist multiple links between "pseudo-initiatic" manifestations and all sorts of other things that, at first sight, would seem to have no relation with them, but which all represent the modern spirit under one or another of its most accentuated aspects; for why indeed, if this were not so, would the "pseudo-initiates" constantly play in all this so important a role?

One could say that, among the instruments or means of every kind put into operation for what is at issue, “pseudo-initiation,” by its very nature, must logically occupy the foremost rank; it is only a cog, of course, but a cog that can command many others, into which these others engage, as it were, and from which they receive their impulse. Here, counterfeiting is pursued still further: “pseudo-initiation” imitates in this the function of invisible motor which, in the normal order, properly belongs to initiation; but let one beware: initiation truly and legitimately represents the spirit, the principial animator of all things, whereas, as far as “pseudo-initiation” is concerned, the spirit is obviously absent. It follows immediately from this that the action thus exercised, instead of being really “organic,” can only have a purely “mechanical” character, which moreover fully justifies the comparison of cogwheels that we have just employed; and is not this character precisely also that which is found everywhere, and in the most striking way, in the modern world, where the machine invades everything more and more, where the human being himself is reduced, in all his activity, to resembling as much as possible an automaton, because all spirituality has been taken away from him? But it is indeed here that the whole inferiority of artificial productions bursts forth, even if a “satanic” skill presided over their elaboration: one can indeed manufacture machines, but not living beings, because, once again, it is the spirit itself that makes and will always make default.

We spoke of an “invisible motor,” and, apart from the will to imitation that manifests itself again from this point of view, there is in this sort of “invisibility,” however relative it may be, an incontestable advantage of “pseudo-initiation,” for the role that we have just described, over anything else of a more “public” character. It is not that “pseudo-initiatic” organizations, for the most part, take great care to conceal their existence; some even go so far as to engage in propaganda perfectly incompatible with their pretensions to esoterism; but, despite this, they are still what is least apparent and what lends itself best to the exercise of a “discreet” action, consequently that with which the “counter-initiation” can enter most directly into contact without having to fear that its intervention risks being unmasked, all the more so since, in these

milieus, it is always easy to find some means of warding off the consequences of an indiscretion or an imprudence. It must also be said that a great part of the public, while knowing more or less of the existence of "pseudo-initiatic" organizations, does not really know what they are and is little disposed to attach importance to them, seeing in them only simple "eccentricities" without serious bearing; and this indifference serves the same designs, albeit involuntarily, just as much as could a more rigorous secrecy.

We have sought to make understood, as exactly as possible, the real, although unconscious, role of "pseudo-initiation," and the true nature of its relations with the "counter-initiation"; one would still have to add that the latter can, at least in certain cases, find in it a milieu of observation and selection for its own recruitment, but this is not the place to insist upon that. What cannot even be given an approximately adequate idea of is the incredible multiplicity and complexity of the ramifications that in fact exist among all these things, and of which only their direct and detailed study could allow one to become aware; but it is well understood that here it is above all the "principle," so to speak, that interests us. However, this is not yet all: up to this point, we have seen in sum why the traditional idea is counterfeited by "pseudo-initiation"; it remains for us now to see more precisely how it is so, and this is what we shall examine in the second part of this study.

(*To be continued*)

THE SYMBOLISM OF HORNS

In his recent study on Celtism, our collaborator Basilide pointed out the importance of Apollo Karneios as the god of the Hyperboreans; the Celtic name Belen is moreover identical with Ablun or Aplun, which among the Greeks became Apollo. We propose to return one day in a more complete manner to the question of the Hyperborean Apollo; for the moment, we shall confine ourselves to a few considerations concerning more especially the name Karneios, as well as that of Kronos with which it is in close relation, since these two names have the same root KRN, which essentially expresses the ideas of "power" and of "elevation".

In the sense of "elevation," the name Kronos suits Saturn perfectly, which in fact corresponds to the highest of the planetary spheres, the "seventh heaven" or the Satya-Loka of the Hindu tradition[1]. One must not moreover regard Saturn as being uniquely, or even primarily, a malefic power, as one sometimes seems inclined to do, for one must not forget that he is above all the regent of the "Golden Age," that is to say of the Satya-Yuga or of the first phase of the Manvantara, which coincides precisely with the Hyperborean period; this clearly shows that it is not without reason that Kronos is identified with the god of the Hyperboreans[2]. It is moreover likely that the malefic aspect results here from the very disappearance of this Hyperborean world; it is by virtue of an analogous "reversal" that every "Land of the Gods," seat of a spiritual center, becomes a "Land of the Dead" when this center has disappeared. It is also possible that this aspect was later concentrated more readily upon the name Kronos, while the beneficent aspect remained, on the contrary, attached to the name Karneios, by reason

1 For the Pythagoreans, Kronos and Rhea represented respectively Heaven and Earth; the idea of elevation is thus also found in this correspondence. — It is only by a more or less late phonetic assimilation that the Greeks identified Kronos or Saturn with Chronos, Time, whereas the roots of these two words are in reality different; it seems that the symbol of the sickle was then also transferred from the one to the other, but this does not enter into our present subject.

2 The sea that surrounded the island of Ogygia, consecrated to Karneios and to Kronos, was called the Cronian Sea (Plutarch, De facie in orbe Lunae). Ogygia, which Homer calls the "navel of the world" (later represented by the Omphalos of Delphi), was moreover only a secondary center having replaced the primitive Thule or Syria at a period much closer to us than the Hyperborean period.

of the doubling of these names which originally are but one; and it is true as well that the symbolism of the Sun itself presents two opposed aspects, vivifying and deadly, productive and destructive, as we have remarked recently with regard to weapons representing the "solar ray"[3].

Karneios is the god of the karn, that is to say of the "high place" symbolizing the Sacred Mountain of the Pole, and which was represented among the Celts either by the tumulus, or by the cairn or heap of stones which has preserved this name. The stone is moreover often in direct relation with the cult of Apollo, as one sees notably by the Omphalos of Delphi, and also by the stone cube that served as altar at Delos, and whose oracle ordered the doubling of its volume; but, on the other hand, the stone also had a particular relation with Kronos; here there is a new parallel that we can only indicate in passing, for this point would deserve to be treated separately[4].

At the same time, Karneios is also, by the very meaning of his name, the "powerful god"[5]; and if the mountain is, under one of its aspects, a symbol of power as well as of elevation, by reason of the idea of stability that is attached to it, there is another symbol that is still more characteristic from this point of view, and that is that of horns. Now there was at Delos, besides the cubic stone that we have just mentioned, another altar called the Keraton, which was entirely formed of the horns of oxen and goats solidly assembled; it is evident that this refers directly to Karneios, whose symbolic relation with horned beasts has even left traces down to our own day[6].

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3 In Greek, the very form of the name Apollo is very close to that of Apollyon, the "destroyer" (cf. Apocalypse IX, 11).

4 One rather generally attributes to the bétyles, which are assimilable to the Omphalos, a "solar" signification; but this must, at a certain period, have been superposed upon a primitive "polar" signification, and it may be that it was thus also for Apollo himself. — Let us note further that Apollo is represented as the protector of springs (the Celtic Borvo was assimilated to him in this respect); and springs are also in relation with the mountain, or with the stone that is its equivalent in "polar" symbolism.

5 This name thus corresponds, in Hebrew, to the divine name Shaddai, which must be more particularly the name of the God of Abraham; now there are again, between Abraham and Kronos, rather remarkable relations that we shall perhaps explain one day.

6 In Brittany, Saint Cornély, substituted for Apollo Karneios, is regarded as the protector of horned beasts; the considerations that we set forth here will allow one to understand that there is there, in reality, much more than the simple "play on words" that some might perhaps be tempted to see in it.

The very name of the horn is moreover manifestly related to the root KRN, as well as that of the crown, which is another symbolic expression of the same ideas, for these two words (in Latin cornu and corona) are very close to one another[7]. It is too evident that the crown is the insignia of power and the mark of an elevated rank for it to be necessary to insist upon it; and we find a first parallel with the horns in the fact that the former and the latter are equally placed on the head, which clearly gives the idea of a "summit"[8]. However, there is yet something else: the crown was originally a circle adorned with points in the form of rays; and horns are likewise regarded as representing luminous rays[9], which brings us back to certain considerations that we have already set forth with regard to symbolic weapons. It is quite clear, moreover, that horns can be assimilated to weapons, even in the most literal sense, and it is also by this that an idea of force or power could be attached to them, as in fact it has been everywhere and always[10]. On the other hand, luminous rays are well suited as attributes of power, whether this be, according to cases, sacerdotal or royal, that is to say spiritual or temporal, for they designate it as an emanation or a delegation of the very source of light, which it indeed is when it is legitimate.

One could easily give multiple examples, from very diverse sources, of horns employed as a symbol of power; they are found notably in the Bible, and more especially still in the Apocalypse[11]; we shall cite

7 The Greek word Keraunos, which designates lightning, seems indeed also to be derived from the same root; let us remark in this connection that lightning ordinarily strikes summits, places, or elevated objects; and one must also take into account the analogy of lightning with the luminous ray, to which we shall have to return.

8 In the Hebrew tradition, Kether or the "Crown" occupies the summit of the Sephirothic Tree.

9 One can find a particularly striking example of this in representations of Moses, for it is known that the appearances of horns that he bears on his forehead are nothing other than luminous rays. Some, among them Huet, Bishop of Avranches, have wished to identify Moses with Dionysos, who is also represented with horns; there would moreover be other curious relations to envisage, but this would take us too far from our subject.

10 The same assimilation is naturally valid also for other animal weapons, such as the tusks of the elephant and of the boar, whose pointed form is moreover similar to that of horns. — Let us add, however, that the duality of horns (and also of tusks) prevents "axial" symbolism from being applicable to them: they are assimilated rather, in this respect, to the two lateral points of the trishūla; and this is also why we speak here of luminous rays in general, and not of the "Celestial Ray," which is, from the double macrocosmic and microcosmic point of view, an equivalent of the "Axis of the World."

11 It must be remarked that here the idea is no longer only that of a legitimate power, but is extended to any power whatsoever, which may be malefic as well as beneficent: there are the horns of the Lamb, but also the horns of the Beast.

another, taken from the Arabic tradition, which designates Alexander under the name of El-Iskandar dhûl-qarnein, that is to say "the one with two horns"[12], which is most commonly interpreted in the sense of a double power extending over the East and over the West[13]. This interpretation is perfectly correct, while not excluding another fact that rather completes it: Alexander, having been declared son of Ammon by the oracle of this god, took as his emblem the two ram's horns which were the principal attribute of the latter[14]; and this divine origin moreover only legitimized him as successor of the ancient sovereigns of Egypt, to whom it was likewise attributed. It is even said that he had himself represented thus on his coins, which, moreover, in the eyes of the Greeks, rather identified him with Dionysos, whose memory he also evoked by his conquests, especially that of India; and Dionysos was the son of Zeus, whom the Greeks assimilated to Ammon; it is possible that this idea was not foreign either to Alexander himself; but, however, Dionysos was ordinarily represented with horns, not of the ram, but of the bull, which constitutes, from the point of view of symbolism, a fairly important difference[15].

It is appropriate indeed to remark that horns, in their symbolic usage, assume two principal forms: that of ram's horns, which is properly "solar," and that of bull's horns, which on the contrary is "lunar," moreover recalling the very form of the crescent To this distinction corresponds that of the two forms that alchemists give to the sign of mercury: the lunar form is here related to vulgar mercury, and the solar form to the mercury of the sages.. One could also, in this regard, refer to the respective correspondences of the two zodiacal signs of Aries and Taurus; but this would give rise above all, through the application that could be made of it to the predominance of one or the other form in different traditions, to "cyclical" considerations into which we cannot

12 The Arabic word qarn is the same as "horn," the root KRN easily changing into QRN and also into HRN, as in the English horn. — This word qarn also has another meaning, that of "age" or "cycle," and most commonly of "century"; this double meaning sometimes gives rise to a curious misunderstanding, some believing that the epithet dhûl-qarnein applied to Alexander means that he lived two centuries.

13 In this respect, the two horns are an equivalent of the two heads of the heraldic eagle.

14 Ammon himself was called "Master of the double horn" (Book of the Dead, ch. CLXV).

15 It is also possible that Alexander wore a helmet adorned with two horns; it is known that horned helmets were in use among many ancient peoples. — Among the Assyro-Babylonians, the horned tiara was a characteristic attribute of divinities.

think of entering at present.

To conclude this overview, we shall note only one more parallel, under certain aspects, between these animal weapons that are horns and what may be called vegetal weapons, that is to say thorns. It is to be noted, in this respect, that many plants that play an important symbolic role are thorny plants[16]; here again, thorns, like other points, evoke the idea of a summit or an elevation, and they can also, in certain cases at least, be taken to represent luminous rays[17]. One thus sees that symbolism is always perfectly coherent, as it must moreover necessarily be, by the very fact that it is not the result of some more or less artificial convention, but that it is on the contrary founded essentially upon the very nature of things.

16 One may give as examples the rose, the thistle, the acacia, the acanthus, etc.

17 The Christian symbolism of the crown of thorns (which is said to be made of acacia thorns) is thus connected, in a way that some may perhaps find unexpected, but which is nonetheless real and exact, with the crown of rays of which we spoke above. — It should also be noted that, in various regions, menhirs are designated by the name of "thorns" (hence, in Brittany and elsewhere, place-names such as La Belle-Épine, Notre-Dame-de-l'Épine, etc.); now the symbolism of the menhir, like that of the obelisk and of the column, relates to the "solar ray" at the same time as to the "Axis of the World."